

Steve Westly *California State Controller*



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STATE CONTROLLER STEVE WESTLY ANNOUNCES TAX RELIEF FOR MILITARY FAMILIES

Sacramento, March 19, 2003 – With more than 250,000 troops recently deployed in the War on Terror, State Controller Steve Westly today issued a reminder that military personnel may be eligible to postpone property tax payments until they return from active duty.

“Our troops deserve the security of knowing they won’t lose their homes over unpaid property taxes,” said Westly. “While they serve their country, we can help protect their families and offer some peace of mind at tax time.”

Controller Westly mailed notices today to all County Tax Collectors in California notifying them of the Federal Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act (SSCRA). Enacted in 1940, the SSCRA offers protection to all personnel entering or called to active duty in military service, including reservists and members of the National Guard. It postpones or suspends certain tax obligations beginning on the date of active duty and terminating within one to three months after discharge from active duty.

“With property tax deadlines approaching, I want all counties to understand this provision and be prepared to provide this relief to our troops,” said Westly. “The Soldiers and Sailors Civil Relief Act provides military families some financial relief and support, whether they are deployed in the crisis in Iraq, or in another part of the world.”

Some of the provisions of the SSCRA are as follows:

- Counties may not charge more than 6% interest for overdue taxes.
- Counties may not issue penalties for overdue taxes.
- Counties may not sell property to acquire back taxes.

The Controller’s Office is authorized by law to provide instruction and advice to tax collectors and to outline the provisions of the SSCRA.

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